Reviewer’s report

Title: An Investigation of Physical and Mental Health Consequences among Chinese Parents Who Lost Their Only Child

Version: 1 Date: 23 Jul 2017

Reviewer: Eva Bergsträsser

Reviewer’s report:

This manuscript on loss-single-child families in a Chinese population is of high interest and the method to analyze this problem appears conclusive. However, the manuscript needs major revisions before publication.

The structure of the introduction is not convincing and needs marked revisions. - On page 4, starting line 46 several aspects of outcomes due to bereavement, particularly in single child families, are listed; however, an introduction for these aspects is lacking. Why do these families need support? This seems clear, but a structured argumentation is needed. Doing this may even shorten the current text with setting some main areas.

Concerning methods, it is not clear why the authors performed interviews (1-2 hours) but only report on the quantitative results from the questionnaires. The section of methods needs revision; for example: "The parents had read the recruitment letter.." is rather obvious. - The process of how the recruitment took place needs to be described. On page 7; the criteria for the target group should be clarified. Point 2 is describing a condition ("finish the questionnaire alone") and not a criterion.

Results - the diseases on page 11 need to be checked and the details beside the groups are not needed. Disease groups should be clarified; for example, "rheumatosis" does not exist as such.

Discussion, as the introduction, a structure and clear line of argument is needed.

Formally, the text needs to be checked for tenses, spaces between words and citation of references. The tables list "normal group" this should be "control group".

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.
Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

Declaration of competing interests
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?

If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

I declare that I have not competing interests.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report
including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal